

The Story My Life Of Faith

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Beatrice Benson recounts her childhood in segregated Texas, the harassment she faced as a young woman, leaving home at fifteen, and her hasty first marriage at seventeen.

Well I guess I'll start by telling you I was born in Jacksonville Texas and 1933. It's a little country town and there was myself and my sister. We were the only two kids in my immediate family, But we had cousins that live close by. They were boys and so they used to come to our house a lot.

They lived across the creek from the back of our house. We used to go across the creek to another neighbor's house and get milk. And there were boys there and their sister was our schoolteacher.

So I didn't have a good life is coming up as a young lady. Everyone said that I was pretty and everyone wanted to misuse me. It didn't make any difference who it was. These things happened.

At the age of seven we moved from there to Dallas Texas. And the same thing happened even there. But this this time we were having a lot of relationships with whites too. You know, and we all rode the bus.

We had to sit behind a sign that says colored on one side and white on the other. So it went from one extreme to the next. I could be standing at the bus stop and someone could walk up, someone like a white person and they could be talking with me. Just as soon as another white person walked up they stopped. Just like they'd never spoken to me, you know.

I know God created all of us because they didn't come into this world a different way than I came in so therefore it's their problem. Whatever, you know is going on.

Well I wrote my mother a letter when I was fifteen and told of what was going on and and my aunt, the one that I was named after, I asked her if I could I go and live with her. She said yeah so I went to live with my aunt.

And while I'm there living with her, I used to help her husband you know of fix fences and what-have-you around their property. One day he told me he said he wanted to get a divorce from my aunt and marry me. I felt like - you know ... I left for one house with such craziness and then came to another crazy house. Somebody talked me into leaving my aunt's house and married me. You know I never would have married him. I was saying oh I got to get out of this house, so at the age of 17 I married the first person to come along who asked me to marry. I'm going to marry him and that's what I did. Well it was the wrong thing to do, but I did it.

After that we were together about a year and then it just wasn't going good at all. So my mother and father came to Vegas because I had an uncle that was in service and he was stationed out here. So that's the reason they came here. One day he took me to work and when I got to work ... I had told my grandmother and my sister of what I was going to do and so when I went to work I told my boss I said I have to get my money and get me a ticket and come to Vegas.

So they gave me my money and I got a ticket and I came to Vegas and so that's how I made it here. All the time I used to have a dream that that I was going to die at a early age and I never, never really understood this you know. But I always thought that I was going to die when I was young.

So I came here and and I started going o second Baptist Church and then I met another man and I got married to him at the age of 21 and we stayed together for eight years. He used to go to the movies with me and but he wouldn't go to church with me.

So then he stopped going to the movie with me and said that he was doing that to get me. I said you have to do it more to keep me. So after the eight years I met someone else and I got a divorce from him. I stayed with him for eight years and then after we got a divorce

I was working at the Thunderbird hotel and that's where I met Helen Danby who is my spiritual mother. She said come to my church. She said she was Canadian. She had white hair just like yours. She say I want you to come over sometime. I said okay. I said you come over to my church and then I'll come to yours. You know I had happen. I'd invite people come over and something always came up. They couldn't come so I said well if she comes to my church, then I have to go to her church. So when I got church that Sunday her head was the first one that I saw.

So I thought, well now I got to go to her church. I had gone to many people's churches before, you know all kind of religion. I used to go to the Seventh Day Adventist Church with a friend of mine and go to my church on a Sunday.

This time I prayed I prayed to God that whatever I was getting into that it was of him because I didn't want to get into anything that wasn't of God. I went there and then I started hearing the Principal. Everything I heard were answers that I had been seeking for inside of me. I said well I guess I'll find out about it when I go to spirit world.



You know that God would tell me about it and so to be able to get things is there I know it had to be from God, you know. That this had to be his truth that he had sinned to deserve to us so I was hooked thinking line up whatever you said so then I started doing all kinds of conditions.

I mean walk-in getting up in the morning walking praying taking cold showers and I just hate cold water on me but I was taking cold showers everything that I could because I wanted to get free from Satan as fast as I could and I had my call my mother was staying with me at the time and I had her going with me. Oh on these walks and I had her to hear the principal although she didn't understand it that much you know. I would try whenever I would have a revelation of something I would tell her about it.

One day she said I am padded hearing a particle possible and I said oh my goodness I don't want my mother to not want to hear about the principle you know. and I realized that she wasn't able to receive these things as fast as I could. So I would try to slow down on on telling her about it. So anyway the center came most everyone from the center came over on her birthday and she cooked the meal for them. She liked the members and everything and so it came a time that they combined all the center's of seven states and they sent the center from Las Vegas to Los Angeles and sent the center from Los Angeles to New York.

So anyway I sold my house and I told my mother... I said you can come with me and she said she didn't want to leave her grandkids - my sister had two kids so she wanted to stay with them so I said okay, now if you stay with her whatever happened I said because I won't be able to come back here to help you or

anything so she'll have to do whatever has to be done for you. And she said okay. So I sold the house and I took as much of my furniture that I could with me and then I sold the rest.

So and I went on to LA and and at that time I had a Mercury Cougar car, a 70 Cougar and by me selling my house I could cook and witness and what-have-you and and I could help you know we the with the center's rent and everything. So I did that and then they said a lot of people from Oakland or the San Francisco someplace they sent them to LA to join I was a center there.

At one point Mrs. Arms was there with us and so they sent a group of us fundraising to Oakland and around different places. I was among that group so and I signed my car over to the center.

I could sell things pretty good and so Father had had the ones that had made the highest amount of money to come to Belvedere. So we went there and Father put us on a special task force team. So then we went around other places that I would never make it to if I had my dinner in the church. Then we fundraised. At that time I I was I was doing pretty good but I wasn't making a lot of money you know so then Yankees Stadium and Washington Monument came.

So I helped with that and after all of those things took place I went back to Manhattan and was working in the Manhattan Church building. The church president -- his name -- no the Jewish man no doctor - no oh now uh anyway I'll probably think of it in a few minutes as well as I know his name and I can't even think of it now. [It was Mose Durst.]

Anyway oh he said he had some place for me to go and then he took me to Belvedere to work.

I was very vivid here for ten years as you all know that I was cooking and I was fundraising and I got so good. I hate that I was driving a van with the trailer hooked onto it and in this trailer I had those helium balloons and I had some dolls that that I made up and I was selling flowers. It was just like a loose store that I had. I would cook and then I would get ready and go out fundraising and I was fundraise until 11 or 12 o'clock at night and then I go back home and I I would say god you're the only one that I would be doing all this for because all my life I've always worked on a job you know never fundraise and then with this fundraising.

I've been standing on the corner selling something to someone and we'll go off to sleep standing there waiting on them to get the money out and they stand there waiting on me to wake up. I mean I didn't ... I've had some very funny experience like That. You know just going round in circles in and going off to sleep being so tired you know.

But I had really good experience working at Belvedere because I would get to see True Parents. They would come over and they'd walk around the property. And would we walk around the property with them. We would sit down and they would talk,. you know.

Father would talk to us and all and then we would go over to East garden and and go into the pool. We got to go to all the kids' [True Children's] birthdays and everything. It was really a nice experience I had working there. I don't know what else, it was you when Father, he'd approach you.

Oh, when I joined it I was uh 37 that's How. I was 37. I was the oldest person in the Las Vegas Church center because everyone else was like 20, 21, 22 you know. And I was just like their mother you know. trying to talk them to stay in the church, you know. So many came in the church and they left, you know.

I got one young lady to join the church. She was 18 and she stayed three years and she said ... said that her ancestors must really have had a hard time with whites, because Father used to say that he would marry her to some white. And what have you. She said she couldn't be less than the white person and so she said she said I got to leave from here. I didn't know how she could stay. But and I was so - I was so heartbroken because she was the only person that I had brought into the church and in for her to leave after three years... It was really hard for me to be able to witness to anyone else.

At Second Baptist [Church] I got a a minister and two deacons to hear all the [Divine] Principal.

After they moved our Las Vegas Center to Los Angeles, then when we came back we couldn't get... I mean they would speak to me but that's all they would do - they went nowhere with the church. So it was just like you know these people had been in a church for 30 and 40 years and more and then you'd give them God and then you take them away and they haven't even had time to even catch hold to the Principal and everything... and, and I guess during that time Satan could really work with them. So they didn't want to have anything else to do with the Unification Church.

So uh-huh how are you able to overcome your resentment toward people I never had any resentment for? It doesn't fit because I just I just always said I know God created us all. So I never... I just felt whites are my brothers and sisters you know. Then what they was feeling towards me wasn't my feeling towards them so I didn't have any resentment. I've been here working ever since I worked for nine years until like - Oh mm mm that's a truck again uh-huh - and at that time I was having so many problems with my knees and all. So uh and then I had to get my knees replaced because all the cartridge was gone out of them.

Then I had to get my hips replaced and all that.

So I had made it past the retirement age anyway. So I just went on and retired, uh-huh, because they wouldn't - they would not like the workload I could do...

She wants me to tell you about my work. I used to work as a cocktail waitress and not a hooker. There was cleaning dressing rooms for a magician.. wait...

I was cleaning the powder room and in 1960 then the NAACP said that they had to give us better jobs, because when I moved Here, I mean we couldn't even go to the hotels. All we could do was just work there. We couldn't go to the casinos or nothing so in 1960 - uh - they said that the casinos had to start giving jobs to the to the people you know. Jobs other than just working as maids in what-have-you and whatever.

So I was working in the ladies room and after the NAACP I wanted to be a bartender. And I asked how could I get into cocktail. So he said if you got a friend, have her show you how to make mixed drinks and everything. He said I would be happy to hire you he said, but I have to hire through the Union.

Well I was already in the Union and I knew Al Bramlet [head of Las Vegas's Culinary Workers Union Local 226 from the 1950s to the 1970s,] so told him. He said I'm happy that they are giving the people that's working for them already a chance so Al made out the paper for me to go. And when I went the casino boss, and he said, "Well Bea, I don't have an opening right now."



The Thunderbird in Las Vegas in 1964

But he said just as soon as he said don't say nothing to anyone he said, but just as soon as I do I will hire you. So he did uh-huh and so I was the first black cocktail waitress at the Thunderbird hotel and the first one in order the first in Las Vegas yeah hmm the year was 1960.

I was a pioneer yeah a pioneer in many things. I was even an inspector in one of the hotels that I worked in. You know I inspected other people's work and and it's really bad because in a way because when I was young my grandmother gave me a whipping once. She had me mopping the floor and I didn't do it right and she gave me a whipping. I had to do it again so I learned from that day whatever you do you do it right the first time and you won't have to do it again.

So that's the way I was with working and when I inspected they had me going around inspecting the ladies rooms and I had to send workers back to fix things in there. I had some ladies to really quit working because they didn't want to do it.

I said well I'm not going to do it for them. I said they're going to have to make their lives into... I'm not going to lose my job because I won't have them go back and do the work right. So I mean this it's just it's really a mystery why I've got a very keen eye for things you know. If anything is out of order I can see it

right away. I had girls where it is really hard and like not being able to do things for myself.

You know it makes it real difficult too because you know I'm so used to having everything spic-and-span.

Some girls left the church and they wanted me to leave with them. I said no I can't - I can't leave the church. I mean I've heard the truth and that's what I've been searching for all my life, you know. To leave with somebody, no, I can't do that. So in 1972 when True Father came to Las Vegas, I said if everybody leaves this church I will be here. I will never leave. So I'm still here and so many so many people that were in the church are gone.

So many and there was a one girl that came in and you know how a spirit world just sends people and then they just keep going. She was going to... I said: "You got all the truth that you need and you are going to India! I can't believe it. It was people that spirit world just brought in and out just like this. So some seeds fall upon hard ground the Sun falls on fertile soil.

When I met him, I just told Father him that when he came back to America that... I was coming back to work you and so he told me he thought that it was good that I was coming back to work.

I never really asked him a question because I like I remember the time that I had a dream about a blessing that was coming up or something and... I can't remember what Father said to me in this dream. He said something but I'm... it's been so long ago I forgotten. But I always said that people that was having dreams about Father, they needed to stay I didn't need anything to have a dream and there's nothing to keep me because I had the truth. So that's all I needed you know I was anchored you know and I remember the time with my heart.

Within those people who are gonna take your money away from you and kill you - Oh God didn't know - uh just you know the would do everything to try to keep me from being in the church. I said nothing, nothing and you know all the time that when I was reading the Bible you know and I was saying this is what Jesus was talking about you know... would you - you know - give up everything to follow him?

And I was willing to give up everything to follow him so because I didn't have to give up anything when I joined it Christian Church. So I knew this this was the time that the Bible was talking about - you know so I was there I was really anchored deep.

And Mother took us all out to buy some clothes and they were saying that uh when they bought clothes for us it was like they was buying clothes you know for the whole world.

You know we were the representative of the world to them and things like that.

When I was at the other... Oh dear oh I used to prepare the room that True Parents would stay in and fix the drinking water and everything for them to drink. Ye Jin would come lay on my bed. I had some gum at one time. I don't know if I still have it or not - where she put on my table. You know I have good memories of the True Children. I talked to one of the sisters that worked at Belvedere and she said someone had had told her that we couldn't even be around True Children and all. I told her we were around the True Children all the time you know. Because I was always over at Belvedere with different ones and I don't know how someone would think that we didn't have any communication with True Children.

I remember one day I cooked one of those lemon upside-down cakes and True Mother came through and got a piece. She had had a person who worked at the garden help me to make one for East Garden the next day. So I made it one for East Garden the next day, yeah. It was priceless.

We had 40 members in the center here and all the kids parents would come on Sunday before they moved. We weren't families then, We were all single.

Yeah but who was there? Well, Perry Cordill, Sam Pell... Jack and Gladys [Korthuis] were our central figures and hmm Bonnie Bonnie i don't remember that last name [Bonnie Hylton], she was a singer.

Jack and Gladys and Bonnie were singing group... Mike Smith oh Mike Smith was in New York and his dad was here, in Las Vegas.

Um there was David, David, David Lowe. He was here - his father had a business here. I don't know if he's still in the San Diego area mm-hmm but his father still lives here.

Oh and Sydelle was here mm-hmm - oh Sydelle [Sydelle Vogel Block Enyeart}... The Words of the Enyeart - oh I just I just have to talk to Sydelle every day every day. Trying to get her connected you know. She was allways ready to leave. I said now sit down you got to stay here. She's Jewish yeah...

[Applause]